

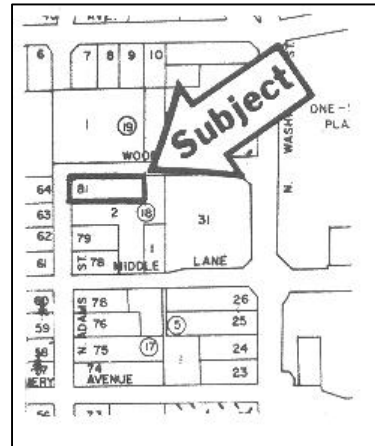
**CITY OF ROCKVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT**

**February 20, 2002
MEETING NO. 02-02**

APPLICATION: HDC02-0209

DATE FILED: February 5, 2002

**APPLICANT/
OWNER:** Morton J. Frome, P.A.
109 North Adams St.
Rockville, MD 20850



PROPERTY DESCRIPTION: 109 North Adams Street, known as the Darby House, was built as a private dwelling c. 1880-1890. The Victorian house later served as the Rockville Institute and private primary classes were held there from 1889 to 1895. It was subsequently used as a residence for the Ricketts and Darby families and then owned by the Methodist Church. It is located at the northeast corner of Wood Lane in the O-2 zone and currently houses law offices.

PREVIOUS ACTIONS AT THIS ADDRESS:

HD-178-87 Request to install a Peerless Rockville plaque to the to the left of the front entrance door; approved 5/19/87

HD-145-86 Request to install a bronze sign (24" wide by 10" high) to the right of the front door with the wording: "Van Grack, Axelson, and Williamonsky, Law Offices"; approved 3/21/86

REQUEST:

The Applicant requests a Certificate of Approval to allow a free-standing 30" x 30" permanent wood sign to identify the building as the Darby Law Center with its address. The sign has already been installed but the required sign permit and Historic District Commission applications were not filed prior to installation.

STAFF COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS:

Staff recommends approval of the sign as it meets the specifications of the City of Rockville Sign Ordinance and the HDC's Guidelines for Historic Property Owners.



Subject Property – Sign at 109 North Adams Street



103 N. Adams Street



101 N. Adams Street



25-33 Wood Lane

Examples of signage at nearby properties

1. *Historic, archeological, or architectural value and significance of the site or structure and its relationship to the historic, archeological, or architectural significance of the surrounding area.*

This house was built in the late 19th century. It is set amongst some of the oldest and most historically significant structures in Rockville.

2. *The relationship of the exterior architectural features of the structure to the remainder of the entire structure and to the surrounding area.*

Signs should be kept to a minimum within the historic districts, according to the HDC's Guidelines for Historic Property Owners. When they are used, they should fit the character of the street. Overall, North Adams Street is best suited for affixed or hanging "lawyers' shingle" signs whereas free-standing signs are generally more appropriate along West Montgomery Avenue, Courthouse Square and Church Street. The design of this particular sign is in keeping with the exterior architectural features of the structure and the surrounding area, however, and is not obtrusive.

3. *The general compatibility of exterior design, scale, proportion, arrangement, texture, and materials proposed to be used.*

The sign is wood with a white background and black lettering. The colors and materials complement the building. Staff would prefer that the sign hang from a single post, such as at 101 and 103 North Adams Street, shown on page two. The sign does meet the dimension restrictions and other requirements of the O-2 zone. It is simple in design and has a limited amount of text.

4. *To any other factors, including aesthetic factors, which the Commission deems to be pertinent.*

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the signage at 109 North Adams Street with the following condition:

1. **A sign permit must be received from the City of Rockville, Department of Planning and Development Services, Inspection Services Division.**